22nd March 1921]

A.—(*a*) The honourable member is referred to Dr. Marsden's report recorded in G.O. No. 459, Home (Education), dated 9th April 1918, which was placed on the Editors' table.

(*b*) No such steps were regarded by the Director of Agriculture as immediately possible and none have been taken by the Government.

(*c*) It is presumed that the honourable member refers to "Indigo Publication No. 8" containing a note by Mr. W. A. Davis on the development of the indigo industry in Assam in conjunction with tea and other crops. The attention of the Government has been drawn to this very recent publication

(*d*) The Government are unable to say.

Women's hospital in Masulipatam.

459 *Q.*—Mr. S. R. Y. Ankinedu Prasad Bahadur: To ask the Hon'ble the Minister for Local Self-Government to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that the Municipal Council of Masulipatam contemplates abolishing the only women's hospital in the town on the plea of want of funds; and

(*b*) whether steps will be taken to prevent this action on the part of the municipality.

A.—The Municipal Council of Masulipatam does not maintain any hospital for women.

Extension of village-sites in zamindaris in Gōdāvari, etc.

460 *Q.*—Sri M. V. Apparao Bahadur: To ask the Hon'ble the Minister for Local Self-Government whether any steps will be taken for the extension of village-sites in zamindari villages in the Gōdāvari and Kistna districts to relieve congestion and improve rural sanitation.

A.—In zamindari villages the duty of providing adequate house-sites rests primarily on the zamindar and the Government have laid down that they do not ordinarily recognize any obligation to provide village-sites in permanently-settled villages. They will however consider the question if definite proposals are received.

Deputation of the Oriya District Association on the Agency Commissioner.

461 *Q.*—Sriman Biswanath Das: To ask the Hon'ble the Home Member if it is a fact that the Oriya District Association of Ganjām waited on a deputation on the Agency Commissioner in September 1920 or thereabouts and to state what action has been taken thereon up to now.

A.—The Government have no information.

Sriman Biswanath Das:—"I would like to know, Sir, how the Government could not have any information on the point when a public body like the Oriya District Association of Ganjām waited on a deputation on the Agency Commissioner and when some of the extracts appeared in the local newspapers."

The Hon'ble Sir Lionel Davidson:—"The answer to the supplementary question is that the Government do not, as a matter of course, receive official information about everything that happens in a district. The answer to the question on the paper was drafted while I was away at Delhi. If I had been present at the time, I should have said that it was a matter within my personal knowledge, not my knowledge as a member of Government, that a deputation had waited on Mr. Harris. I have now in my hand a letter which has just been received from him, giving some particulars of what

passed when that deputation met him. And I shall be happy to give the honourable member separately further information on the subject if he so desires."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS :—"I shall be very glad if the honourable member would take action upon it."

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT :—"Do I understand the honourable member to say that he was in possession of the information for which he had asked? The question is to ask the Hon'ble the Home Member if it is a fact that the Oriya District Association of Ganjām waited in deputation on the Agency Commissioner in September 1920 or thereabouts. Was the Honourable Member in possession of that information before he asked the question?"

Sriman BISWANATH DAS :—"Of course I had some idea of it."

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT :—"The purpose of interpellating the Government is to ask for information. In this particular case the honourable member's intention was to ask what action had been taken upon the deputies' representation. The question should have taken some such form as: 'With reference to the deputation I desire to know what action has been taken up to now.' Ordinarily when honourable members have the information, it is better to put the question in such a form as to lead the Government on to the answer. Otherwise there is just this contingency. The Government may say 'We have no information,' and the honourable member would have to put a supplementary question. If honourable members put the Government in possession of the information they have, it will facilitate the disposal of questions materially."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS :—"I think, Sir, I may be allowed to add one word of personal explanation. I approached one or two official gentlemen and they said that they did not know anything. So I was anxious to know whether the Government knew anything at all about it."

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT :—"It is far from my intention to suggest that the honourable member has done anything wrong. I simply suggested to him a certain procedure for the purpose of facilitating work."

Smuggling of gold.

462 Q.—Mr. B. P. DEVARAJULU NAYUDU : To ask the Hon'ble the Member for Finance whether—

(*a*) it is true that certain insured parcels which were declared to contain gold jewellery and were passed at the Colombo Post Office for delivery in Karikal in French India were seized in March 1919 at Dhanushkodi, and acquired by the Collector of Customs, Madras, under the Gold Import Act, 1917 ;

(*b*) such seizure and acquisition are contrary to rule 31, clause 7, of the rules and notification in Appendix B framed under the Sea Customs Act VIII of 1878, as amended by Acts IV and XII of 1914 ;

(*c*) under article 93 of the Post Office Guide, such parcels should be returned to the place of origin if they are deliverable in British India ;

(*d*) it is not true in the present cases of nearly 30 parcels seized they are deliverable out of British India where they are not so prohibited ;

(*e*) it is true that the Government refused to pay the then market value of the gold seized, viz., Rs. 17 in March 1919 per sovereign, but paid the foreign addressees only Rs. $10\frac{1}{4}$ per sovereign ; and

(*f*) it is true that the petitions of protest of such addressees were dismissed by the Board of Revenue and the Government of Madras, and their notices of civil suit were discarded.